



San Diego City Attorney MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE

NEWS RELEASE

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AGUIRRE SUPPORTS UTILITY COMMISSION'S REJECTION OF SUNRISE POWERLINK THROUGH DESERT

San Diego, CA – San Diego City Attorney Michael Aguirre applauded the California Public Utility Commission for rejecting a San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) proposal to build the Sunrise Powerlink across Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

“The Commission’s proposed decisions today confirm that this ill-conceived power line isn’t needed for SDG&E to reach the 20 percent renewable energy target by 2010 set by the state for electric utilities,” said Aguirre.

“I urge San Diego Gas & Electric to immediately abandon plans for expensive transmission line boondoggles and instead vastly expand and accelerate efforts to develop rooftop solar-electric systems.”

Rooftop photovoltaic or PV systems, Aguirre noted, would make use of the region’s abundant sunshine and rooftops, while requiring little in the way of expensive transmission upgrades. Using urban rooftops for solar electric system development, he added, will also avoid the need to build more electric transmission lines in the fire-prone backcountry of San Diego County.

Earlier this year, the City Attorney reminded SDG&E that its franchise agreement with the City requires the utility to be in compliance with all state laws. Pursuant to that franchise agreement, Aguirre said he expects SDG&E to comply with the state mandate that utilities derive 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by the close of 2010. The state law is intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce dependence on burning fossil fuels.

SDG&E currently derives just 6 percent of its electricity from renewables, compared with 12 percent for PG&E and 16 percent for Southern California Edison.

SDG&E, a Sempra Energy subsidiary, had proposed building the \$1.5 billion, 150-mile Sunrise Powerlink from Imperial County, across Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and then through a broad swath of North County communities. The utility had said the line was needed by 2010 to ensure regional electric reliability and also needed to reach to achieve the 20 percent by 2010 renewable target.

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But those assertions were rejected by a proposed PUC decision and by a proposed alternative decision published yesterday. The decisions were reached following an extensive process of evidentiary hearings, environmental review and public hearings.

While the proposed decision from the administrative law judge in the case flatly rejects the Sunrise proposal, alternative decision writing by PUC Commission Dian Grueneich would allow construction of a new transmission line south of Anza-Borrego Desert Park, if SDG&E can demonstrate the line would carry substantial quantities of electricity generated from renewable sources in the Imperial Valley.

Both decisions are scheduled to be submitted to the five-member Public Utilities Commission for a vote before the close of this year.

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